791 in a while there is some truth to it." Or, like our countrymen who in other respects consider themselves enlightened, they will adopt the standpoint: "After all, you never can tell . . ."

791 558 The unsuccessful soothsayer does not have to look far for ridicule. In Bebai I heard a poem ridiculing a man from the Ntum region who had been deliberately taken in. One man hid his chopping knife in his house in the presence of witnesses and then went to the soothsayer to ask him quite innocently to tell him where the knife was that he had lost. After all kinds of mystification and tomfoolery the soothsayer answered that the knife had been stolen in the field during the clearing of the farm. Amidst the hilarity of all those present, the "victim of the theft" produced the knife from where it was hidden, and the soothsayer departed, shamed.

721 787 In times of war, however, the soothsayer's reputation is reestablished. Before setting out against the enemy village, the entire company of young men stand around him in a circle, the soothsayer leaps about with the horn in his hand, shaking it according to all the rules of his art, and then suddenly points it /196/ to one of those standing around him, saying: "You will be killed, or (pointing to another) you will be wounded if you go into battle." Or the wise man says: "You can go confidently into battle for nothing will happen to you," but he will say this -- if we may trust his shrewdness -- only to those who in any case tend to stay in the rear. The person who has received a bad "prognosis" stays safely at home, and in this way the soothsayer is seldom found out.

787 In Volume II, page 108 ("Religion") /Ed., not translated/ we saw that the Pangwe believes he can read the future from dreams through appropriating the power of the soul by holding his head in the resin fire kindled on the grave. In so doing he learns to distinguish true dreams from false ones, and consequently comes to recognise what the future will bring.

I am not acquainted with animal oracles in the south, but among the Jaunde there is a spider oracle. Zenker (1) writes about

1. G. Zenker, "Yaunde," in Mitteilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus

539 514 836 When the girl went home she thought to herself: "I wonder what that means: ng(e) oa dzĭn ma: obébe, ng(e) oa bĭne ma: obébe!?" When she was in the house, she was still thinking about it; then she suddenly smelled the odor and found the little pot behind the bed. She took it, poured its contents into the plantain grove behind the house, and cleaned it thoroughly with water. Meanwhile her lover had secretly come back to the village and observed from a hiding place how the affair was developing, whether the girl would call other people and publicly expose him (1). But nothing /258/ of the kind happened. He then saw

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1. In that case the lover would not have been able to hide from the mockery of his companions and would have become completely unacceptable in the village of his beloved. It should not be forgotten how terribly disgraceful a Negro finds such an occurrence, indeed, the very thought of a natural need to relieve himself. A person who has had, as we would say, an accident, as in the above case, will be socially unacceptable for a long time if the incident becomes known, while we "barbarians" with our trifling amount of oson look upon such an occurrence as a painful accident for the moment, but do not carry it any further and, moreover, regard the physiological evacuation of the body as something "natural." Unfortunate uncivilized civilized people! The savages are better people after all! They have a countless number of circumlocutions for the terrible deed: mà ke a npĕ̀ ŋ̀ bĭǎ́, "I am going to fetch a medicine"; a bŏbe ekĭ̄ĭdi, "to inspect the spring trap"; a bŏbe ebē̄, "to inspect the pitfall"; a tĭ̄ ndzĭ̄.

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